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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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TO: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Chair  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley   
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORTS – ETTIE LEE HOMES, INC., OAK KNOLLS HOME AND WATERFLOW RANCH**

We have completed a review of the two group homes operated by Ettie Lee Homes, Inc., Oak Knolls (Oak Knolls), and Waterflow Ranch. Both homes are licensed with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Oak Knolls is an eleven-bed facility located in the First Supervisorial District that provides care for boys ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the review, Oak Knolls was providing services to four Los Angeles County DCFS children and seven Los Angeles County Probation Department children.

Waterflow Ranch is an eleven-bed facility located in Riverside County that provides care for boys ages 11-14 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Waterflow Ranch was providing services for six Los Angeles County Probation, one DCFS, and three Riverside County Probation children.

**Scope of Review**

The purpose of the review is to verify that Oak Knolls and Waterflow Ranch are providing services outlined in their Program Statements. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues. The review included an evaluation of each home's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with three children placed in each respective home at the time of the reviews. The interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by Oak Knolls and Waterflow Ranch, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

**Summary of Findings**

Generally, Oak Knolls and Waterflow Ranch are providing the services outlined in their Program Statements. We noted a few areas where improvements can be made.

**Oak Knolls**

Oak Knolls needs to make minor repairs within the facility; furnish residents with an adequate supply of books; provide timely Quarterly Reports for all residents; ensure Individual Education Plans are prepared where necessary; and counsel a problematic staff person and monitor to ensure the person treats residents appropriately, as agreed to by Oak Knolls management.

**Waterflow Ranch**

Waterflow needs to make minor improvements to its facility and maintain current Quarterly Reports for each resident.

Attached are detailed reports of monitoring findings.

**Review of Report**

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. The Agency's management has agreed to provide DCFS with a written corrective action plan within fifteen business days of this report. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our reviews.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact Patrick McMahon at (213) 974-0729.

JTM:PM:CC

- c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
- Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
- Public Information Office
- Audit Committee
- David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
- Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer
- Richard Huey, Vice President, Ettie Lee Homes, Inc.

**ETTIE LEE HOMES, INC.**  
**Oak Knolls Home**  
**620 North Cerritos Avenue**  
**Azusa, CA 91702**  
**626-960-4861**  
**License No.: 191502141**  
**Rate Classification Level: 12**

## **I. FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT**

*(Facility Based - No Sample)*

### **Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Three**

### **Comments:**

Oak Knolls Group Home (GH) is located in a residential neighborhood and has a private school on its grounds. The exterior of the home is nicely maintained except for a portion in the back where two windows were removed and the resulting empty spaces filled in but not painted. No observed safety hazards were noted either inside or outside of the home.

The interior of the home is generally neat and clean. The appearance has been greatly improved by new wood laminate flooring in the living and dining rooms and the remodeling of the kitchen. However, the carpeting in the staff office, upstairs hallways, and resident bedrooms, is worn and stained. In addition, the south wall in the laundry room was recently patched but not painted.

The residents' bedrooms are pleasant and individualized. The linens, furniture, and window treatments in the rooms are in good condition.

There is ample, age-appropriate play equipment in the home. There is a basement-level recreation room that has a foosball table, punching bag, weights, and TV. Computers are available to the residents. There are a few books available, but not a sufficient amount to encourage reading.

Breakfast and lunch are the only meals served at Oak Knolls during the school week; residents eat their dinners at the Day Treatment site. Based on the meal schedule, there is an adequate supply of perishable and non-perishable foods properly stored.

**Recommendations**

1. **Oak Knolls management:**
  - a. **Paint the exterior wall where the windows were removed, and the south side of the laundry room.**
  - b. **Replace the carpeting throughout the facility as needed.**
  - c. **Furnish residents with an adequate supply of books.**

**II. PROGRAM SERVICES**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Three**

**Comments:**

The residents meet the GH’s population criteria as outlined in their program statement and have complete initial diagnostic assessments in their files.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-limited. The residents stated that they participate in developing and/or modifying their NSPs and their signatures are on the NSPs as verification. Documentation reflects that the NSPs are sent to the residents’ authorized representatives with a request to review and/or approve the plan, sign and return it to the GH.

One resident had a Quarterly Report that was current and comprehensive; the second did not have a Quarterly Report in his file; and the third resident had not been at Oak Knolls long enough to require a Quarterly Report.

All three residents are receiving individual and group therapy sessions as well as other services described in the program statement.

**Recommendations**

2. **Oak Knolls management maintain current Quarterly Reports for each resident.**

**III. EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Three**

**Comments:**

The residents were enrolled in the private school on Oak Knolls' campus and their files contained current report cards. None of the residents has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and Oak Knolls staff was unable to determine which, if any, of the three residents needed one. The residents reported that they receive adequate cognitive stimulation through the Day Treatment Services and appropriate educational support.

Development of daily living skills is a part of Oak Knolls' program. The residents reported that they perform household chores that are fair and reasonable; are taught and practice personal hygiene; and that they learn about budgeting and shopping.

All of the residents receive Independent Living Skills training during Day Treatment. This course addresses such topics as money management and job interview skills. None of the residents is employed.

**Recommendations**

- 3. Oak Knolls management determine which residents require Individualized Education Plans and ensure they are prepared and utilized.**

**IV. RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Three**

**Comments:**

Oak Knolls schedules specific activities for its residents and follows through with their schedules. Residents reported that there is a combination of in-home and off-ground recreation available. They also reported that Oak Knolls provides transportation to and from all activities; that the residents in the home participate in planning activities; and that activities of their choice are allowed if they are on a high enough level and have the approval of their Deputy Probation Officer (DPO).

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## V. PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION

### Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

**Sample size for resident interviews:** There were eleven residents placed in the group home at the time of the review. A review of case files was conducted for the four Los Angeles County residents on psychotropic medications.

### Comments:

Of the four files reviewed, three files have current court authorizations for the administration of psychotropic medication. In the remaining file, there is a request for an emergency authorization and documentation of reasonable follow-up. Medication logs are appropriately maintained and there is documentation of the children's monthly visits to a psychiatrist for reviews of their medication and evaluation of their progress in therapy.

### Recommendations

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## VI. PERSONAL RIGHTS

### Method of assessment – Resident interviews

**Sample size for resident interviews: Three**

### Comments:

The residents express overall satisfaction with Oak Knolls in such areas as food, housing, and general privacy.

Upon placement, all residents are given an orientation which includes a review of the group home's policies and procedures. Oak Knolls has an appropriate system of discipline in place which the residents understand and consider fair.

For the most part, the residents like and appreciate staff. Each resident felt there is at least one staff person he trusts and can talk to. They reported that most staff is respectful and treats them well. The residents report that there is one staff person who "screams and yells" and antagonizes the residents. During the exit conference, this matter was discussed with an administrator from the Ettie Lee Homes, Inc., who stated that the staff would be counseled and monitored.

The residents stated that they understand their right to refuse psychotropic medication. All three reported that a refusal would result in a Special Incident Report (SIR) being sent to their social worker or DPO, but that they do not believe they would be punished

for refusing to take their medication.

The residents felt that their personal rights are respected in the areas of health care; religious freedom; respect of ethnic/cultural lifestyle; and the ability to call their County representatives and/or family when they wish.

### **Recommendations**

- 4. Oak Knolls management counsel the problematic staff and monitor to ensure the residents are treated appropriately.**

## **VII. CLOTHING AND ALLOWANCE**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Three**

### **Comments:**

Oak Knolls provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The GH supplies its residents with the required monthly clothing allowance in the amount of fifty dollars, and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to the residents is of good quality and sufficient quantity.

The residents reported that they receive at least the minimum weekly allowance; are able to earn additional money above the base allowance; and can spend their allowances as they choose.

The group home provides residents with adequate personal care items and sufficient, secure space to store their personal items.

Residents have the opportunity to maintain a life book if they want.

### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**ETTIE LEE HOMES, INC.**  
**Waterflow Ranch**  
**1119 Seventh Street**  
**San Jacinto, California 92383**  
**(626-960-4861**  
**License No.: 330901030**  
**Rate Classification Level: 12**

## **I. FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT**

*(Facility Based - No Sample)*

**Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Three**

### **Comments:**

Waterflow Ranch is located in rural San Jacinto, is well maintained with a swimming pool and large yard. The home blends in with the other houses in the neighborhood and there were no observed safety hazards inside or outside.

Common areas in the house, such as the living room, kitchen, recreation room, play room, and bathrooms are generally neat and clean. However, the carpeting throughout the house is old, worn, and stained in several places. Also, the toilet stall of the bathroom in hallway number two has a wall that has been patched and primed but not painted.

The bedrooms that the residents are allowed to personalize with pictures and other items are clean and neat. The linens, furniture, and window treatments are in good condition.

Waterflow Ranch has a good selection of recreation equipment and reading material available, including a swimming pool, pool table, and a play room with various games, crafts, and books.

There is an ample supply of both perishable and non-perishable foods properly stored.

### **Recommendations**

- 1. Waterflow Ranch management install new carpeting throughout the house and paint the stall wall in bathroom number two.**

## **II. PROGRAM SERVICES**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Three**

**Comments:**

The residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in the program statement and have complete initial diagnostic assessments in their files.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-limited. The residents stated that they participate in developing and/or modifying their NSPs and their signatures are on the NSPs as verification. Documentation reflects that the NSPs are sent to the residents' authorized representatives with a request to review and/or approve the plan, sign and return it to the Agency.

Only one of the three residents had a current Quarterly Report.

The residents are receiving services as described in the program statement. A full-time therapist assigned to the agency is able to provide them with counseling on a weekly and as needed basis.

**Recommendations**

2. **Waterflow Ranch management maintain current Quarterly Reports for each resident.**

**III. EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Three**

**Comments:**

The residents were enrolled in school and had current report cards in their files. One resident required and had a current Individualized Education Plan. The residents stated that they receive educational support from the agency and approximately one to two hours of cognitive stimulation per day.

The residents at Waterflow Ranch are too young for emancipation services. They reported that they are taught daily living skills which include household chores, personal hygiene, and simple money management skills. None of the residents are employed.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

#### **IV. RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

Waterflow Ranch schedules specific activities for its residents and follows through with their schedules. Residents reported that there is a combination of in-home and off-ground recreation available. They also reported that Waterflow Ranch provides transportation to and from all activities; that the residents in the home participate in planning activities; and that there is sufficient leisure time available to all.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

#### **V. PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: There were eleven residents placed in the agency at the time of the review. A review of case files was conducted for the two Los Angeles County residents on psychotropic medications.**

**Comments:**

Both of the residents on psychotropic medication had current court authorizations in their files, and documentation verifying regular visits to the psychiatrist for medication evaluations and assessments of progress in therapy. Medication logs were appropriately maintained.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

#### **VI. PERSONAL RIGHTS**

**Method of assessment – Resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Three**

**Comments:**

The residents express satisfaction with the agency in areas such as food, housing, the ability to go about their daily living functions without interference, and general privacy.

Upon placement, each resident is given an orientation which includes a review of the Agency's policies and procedures. Waterflow Ranch has an appropriate system of discipline in place which the three residents understand and consider fair. The residents indicated that the emphasis is not on punishment, but on learning. One resident reported, "You make a mistake, you face up to it and learn from it. You take the consequences and then you move on." He stated that during this process, if "you choose to act like a man," (i.e., accept responsibility) the Waterflow staff will support "and stand with you."

All three residents reported that Waterflow Ranch staff treats them well and respects their personal dignity. There is a full-time therapist whose open door policy allows the residents to discuss problems when they are current.

The residents stated that their personal rights are respected in the areas of health care; religious freedom; ethnic/cultural lifestyle; and the ability to call their families and/or County representative as needed.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**VII. CLOTHING AND ALLOWANCE**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Three**

**Comments:**

Waterflow Ranch provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The agency supplies its residents with the required monthly clothing allowance in the amount of fifty dollars which the residents can defer for one month if they choose. Residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes and the clothing provided is of good quality and sufficient quantity.

The agency provides its residents with a fair minimum weekly allowance and they have the opportunity to earn additional money.

The agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and sufficient, secure space to store their personal items.

The residents report that they can maintain life books if they choose.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**